



HOLDREGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOUNDATION

Giving Back to Education

HHS Alumni Recognition Feature!

Dear HHS Alumni and HPS Foundation Supporters,

Holdrege High School is fortunate to have many very successful graduates. We are excited to continue sharing the stories of some of those HHS Alums thanks to the journalistic talents of Kristine (Long) Jacobson, Class of 1990.

We also welcome your suggestions and comments.

Sincerely,

*Teresa Kroll, Chairman
HPS Foundation Committee*

Mike Tringe - Class of 1997

HHS and Harvard grad giving the world a voice through video with CreatorUp!

By Kristine Jacobson

When Mike Tringe graduated from Holdrege High School in 1997, he set out for Harvard University on a Navy ROTC scholarship with the goal of becoming a medical doctor. He earned a bachelor's degree with honors from Harvard, but his career path changed after graduation when he spent three years in Morocco as part of a Harvard overseas teaching program. His experiences there led him to pursue a career in filmmaking, and he has started a company called CreatorUp! that he hopes will change the future of education and give people around the world a voice through video.

While online learning is nothing new, CreatorUp! takes it to a new level and focuses on teaching creative skills mainly related to video. From anywhere in the world, high school or college students, aspiring creators or professionals can access CreatorUp! and take a class on "How to Make A Short Film from Start to Finish," "How to Make Animated Graphics," "How to Develop a Fund-Raising Video" and many more. In the future, farmers may even be able to learn how to use drones to capture video that will improve their

farming practices. Classes generally range in price from \$20 to \$95.

Tringe said that 60 percent of employers seek candidates who have marketable creative digital skills, and he is working with schools around the country to help provide these important skills through CreatorUp! "You want these kids to graduate with 21st century skills," he said. "I want to change education. I think it's broken, and people are paying too much money for job-ready skills."



Mike Tringe

Tringe's Education

Mike is the son of Bill and Sheila Tringe, and he spent many hours of his youth walking the streets of Holdrege to and from school and delivering newspapers for the Citizen. He enjoyed the sense of community in Holdrege and felt safe and supported.

"I also felt a sense that people would give you what you asked for in terms of your curiosities," he said, telling of a neighbor who shared her talents of making Christmas ornaments with him.

"From a business perspective and from a creative perspective, I do feel that these experiences that I had from ages 5-10 or 5-15 or 5-18 really helped me become the person that I am," he said.

In high school, Mike was involved in band, choir, speech and drama, student council, class plays, football, cross country, basketball, and track, where he placed at state in the hurdles.

He said many teachers and coaches "were huge" in his life, encouraging him to reach beyond what he thought he could accomplish. He mentioned his coach and teacher Rick Jeffery, speech and drama teachers Linda Crandall and Barbara Blackburn, art teacher Christi Kosmicki, and coaches Jerry Buck and Mark Waller. "Everybody there was awesome," he said of his high school experience.

During his senior year, he applied to more than 16 colleges, including seven Ivy League colleges, as he was excited to explore the world outside of Holdrege. He chose Harvard, where he would participate in the Navy ROTC program and run hurdles in the track program.

His freshman year at Harvard was challenging to say the least, waking up at 5 a.m. to participate in Navy training and exercises, attending pre-med classes, going to track practice and then studying. After that year, he decided the Navy wasn't the best route for him. And then, a hamstring injury prevented him from participating in track, so he focused on his academics for the remainder of his time there.

He was still planning on attending medical school when he left for Morocco for his overseas teaching assignment, but his experiences there changed his direction. He had started experimenting with filmmaking his senior year at Harvard and then continued to do so in Morocco, where he documented his experiences on film.

He landed in Morocco just days before the Sept. 11 attacks in the United States and was intrigued by the lack of news coverage with different points of view in that country. He also realized that personal expression was not a priority for this Arab country. "In Morocco, there was no global perspective and there was no global conversation," he said. "And so, my students were focusing on really negative thoughts. Negative thoughts about America and negative stuff about themselves."

After two years of teaching English in Morocco, he started a filmmaking program for students during his third year there so that he could teach them how to share their story and create a voice for themselves. "We live in a very scary time where cultural conversation can have important implications," Mike said. "To be able to give people the tools to tell their own stories and create their own media is a way to create dialog and way to relieve global tensions that our leaders and our political atmosphere is creating. I think terrorism would not exist as much as it does if there was more access to media makers in those countries, because the people who are believing all of this radical ideology would have different points of view to consider rather than a singular point of view."

Mike became hooked on this concept of creating a better world through video after his experience in Morocco, and it pointed his career in a new direction. Today, four of the six students in his Morocco filmmaking class are still making films.

Filmmaking Career

As Mike was preparing to leave Morocco, he applied to film schools and business schools in the United States. He was accepted into the University of Southern California's prestigious film school, which set him on the direction of working in entertainment.

He started his first job in the entertainment industry at Creative Artists Agency in the film finance and sales department, where he facilitated deals and sales for independent films, including the movie "Paranormal Activity." He then worked in creative development for Vuguru, an independent studio that develops and finances scripted, story-driven content for distribution domestically and internationally. He also worked at Blip Networks in content partnerships.

Tringe said he enjoyed working in both the business and creative side of the entertainment industry, which is what initially attracted him to that career. "It's quite unique that you can take a simple idea and make it into a multi-million global business," he said. "That's what every TV and movie is. It is just somebody's idea."

In May 2012, he took his own idea of changing the world of education, relieving global tension, and giving creative people the skills they need to share their stories, and made it a reality.

He and a colleague from USC launched CreatorUp!, and since then have been working tirelessly making business connections and promoting their services to colleges, high schools, professionals, and amateurs.

"This company is a hybrid between education and entertainment," he said. "I wanted to take this amazing opportunity that I had to go to USC film school and make it accessible to anyone at an affordable price."

CreatorUp!, which is headquartered in Los Angeles, now offers 30 courses and has more than 5,000 users. He said one student who completed a CreatorUp!

course updated his work through the program and then landed a bid for a \$16,000 project.

In the next three to six months, Mike said they hope to add a class using drones to make video. This could even be useful for farmers back in Phelps County who are seeking to use drone technology to improve farming practices. "People have not imagined how video will be used in the next five years," he said.

CreatorUp! helps Mike realize his professional goals and his personal goals. "We are only here for less than 100 years," Mike said. "What are you going to do with your time while you are here? You want to do something that has an impact."



About Us

The mission of the HPS Foundation is to support and enhance the educational efforts of students and teachers of Holdrege Public Schools by providing funding for innovative and challenging programs, learning experiences, and activities.

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